

**Speech by H.E. Kunio Umeda, Ambassador of Japan at the opening ceremony of Nutrition For Growth, co-hosted with the governments of Brazil and the UK, on August 4th, 2016**

The Brazilian Minister of Health, Mr. Ricardo Barros,  
The Director General of WHO, Dr. Margaret Chan,  
The Director General of FAO, Mr. Jose Graziano da Silva  
The Head of DFID Ethiopia and DFID Nutrition Champion, Mr.  
George Turkington,  
Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Social and Argarian, Mr.  
Alberto Beltrame,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for Japan to co-host, along with Brazil and the UK, this event of “Nutrition for Growth” as a means to tackle nutrition issues on such a special occasion as the Rio Olympic Games.

Before I refer to nutrition issues, I would like to share with you the background on bilateral cooperation between Japan and Brazil, and Japan and the United Kingdom.

Back in the nineteen seventies and nineties, Japan and Brazil worked closely to promote the development of the Brazilian central-west region, called the “Cerrado,” which was considered a deserted and a wasteland. Nowadays, Brazil has become one of the leading global powers in agriculture and contributes enormously to global food security. Also, the Brazilian Japanese immigrants and

descendants are renowned for their contribution to agriculture by cultivating vegetables, fruits and grains in the states of São Paulo, Santa Catarina, and in the Federal District, just to mention a few areas. Their work has been contributing immensely to improve Brazilian dietary habits and help promote more balanced nutrition and ameliorate significantly the health of Brazilians.

Japan and the United Kingdom are strong and longtime partners in G7 and at the United Nations where we have been working closely together on nutrition and food issues. On July 5, the Embassy of Japan in the United Kingdom and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) co-hosted an event on nutrition and the event contributed to increase momentum toward this event of "N4G".

We are very glad to deepen our partnership relations with Brazil and the United Kingdom: we share a strong relationship in this field.

When we look around the world, a number of people, regardless of their level of economic development, are suffering from various forms of malnutrition, such as life-threatening hunger, micronutrient deficiencies, low caloric intake and obesity. Furthermore, we cannot solve this issue with just one approach, as nutritional needs are different throughout life's stages, for example the first 1,000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday, the school period, adolescence, the perinatal period, maturity and old age. Meanwhile, improving nutrition reduces the risk of illness and death, benefits people suffering from serious diseases, and enables people to participate productively in economic and social activities.

Thus nutrition improvement is recognized as a necessary element for sustainable development. We welcome that the nutrition improvement is treated as one of the goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was adopted last year. 2030 Agenda also places an emphasis on the ownership. Japan will continue to provide cooperation aimed at developing countries' self-reliant development by emphasizing their own initiatives and self-help efforts while taking advantage of Japan's experience and expertise.

We have addressed malnutrition in Japan for a long time. Let me give four typical examples.

First, the National Health and Nutrition Survey, which has been conducted annually since 1945, sheds light on the physical status, the intake of nutrients and the lifestyles of nationals.

Secondly, we have a system of qualifications for dieticians and registered dieticians. They manage nutrition and provide nutritional guidance in places including hospitals, welfare facilities and schools.

Thirdly, we have a system of school meals. Providing good quality school meals can help to enhance the effectiveness of education.

Fourthly, in our schools we promote *shokuiku*, which means food and nutrition education in Japanese, so that children can acquire an accurate knowledge of food and appropriate dietary habits.

Building on this experience, and based on the concept of “human security,” Japan has made good progress on improving nutrition globally, including newborn and child nutrition, as part of its contributions towards poverty eradication by achieving Universal Health Coverage and "Quality growth".

The involvement of the private sector is also invaluable for improving nutrition. At the Nutrition for Growth Summit co-hosted by the UK government, Brazilian government and the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) in 2013, Japan committed to promote the public private partnership in nutrition. In response to this, we plan to establish the Nutrition-Japan Public-Private Platform (NJPPP). This platform intends to improve the business environment to support the efforts of Japanese companies for tackling malnutrition in developing countries. In the implementation phase, we will pay enough attention to food safety.

This year, the G7 Summit was hosted in Japan.

As for political initiatives within the international community, we discussed global malnutrition with other participating nations and stakeholders involved at the G7 Niigata Agriculture Ministers’ Meeting in April and at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in May.

It is especially noteworthy that we elaborated on the G7 Vision for Action on Food Security and Nutrition in the sector on food security, where we have identified collective actions in three focused areas: empowering women, improving nutrition through a people-centered approach and ensuring sustainability and resilience within the agricultural and food systems. These actions have already been

defined.

On August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, we will also co-host the 6th Tokyo International Conference on African Development, TICAD VI, in Nairobi, Kenya, and Japan and many authorities of African countries will participate.

There are three priority areas.

The first one is “Promoting structural economic transformation through economic diversification and industrialization.”

The second is “Promoting resilient health systems for quality of life.”

The last one is “Promoting social stability for shared prosperity.” Addressing malnutrition has to be integrated in all the priority areas, and we will also take this opportunity to consider establishing a new Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA). This initiative aims to accelerate nutritional improvement in Africa by coordinating several sectors including health, agriculture and education. Through these initiatives, we are confident of helping to reduce malnutrition in several African countries.

Finally, I would like to finish by expressing my sincere hope that today’s event will prove to be a successful opportunity for significant improvement on global nutrition issues and extend the confirmation that Japan will make its best efforts for improved nutrition towards the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games.